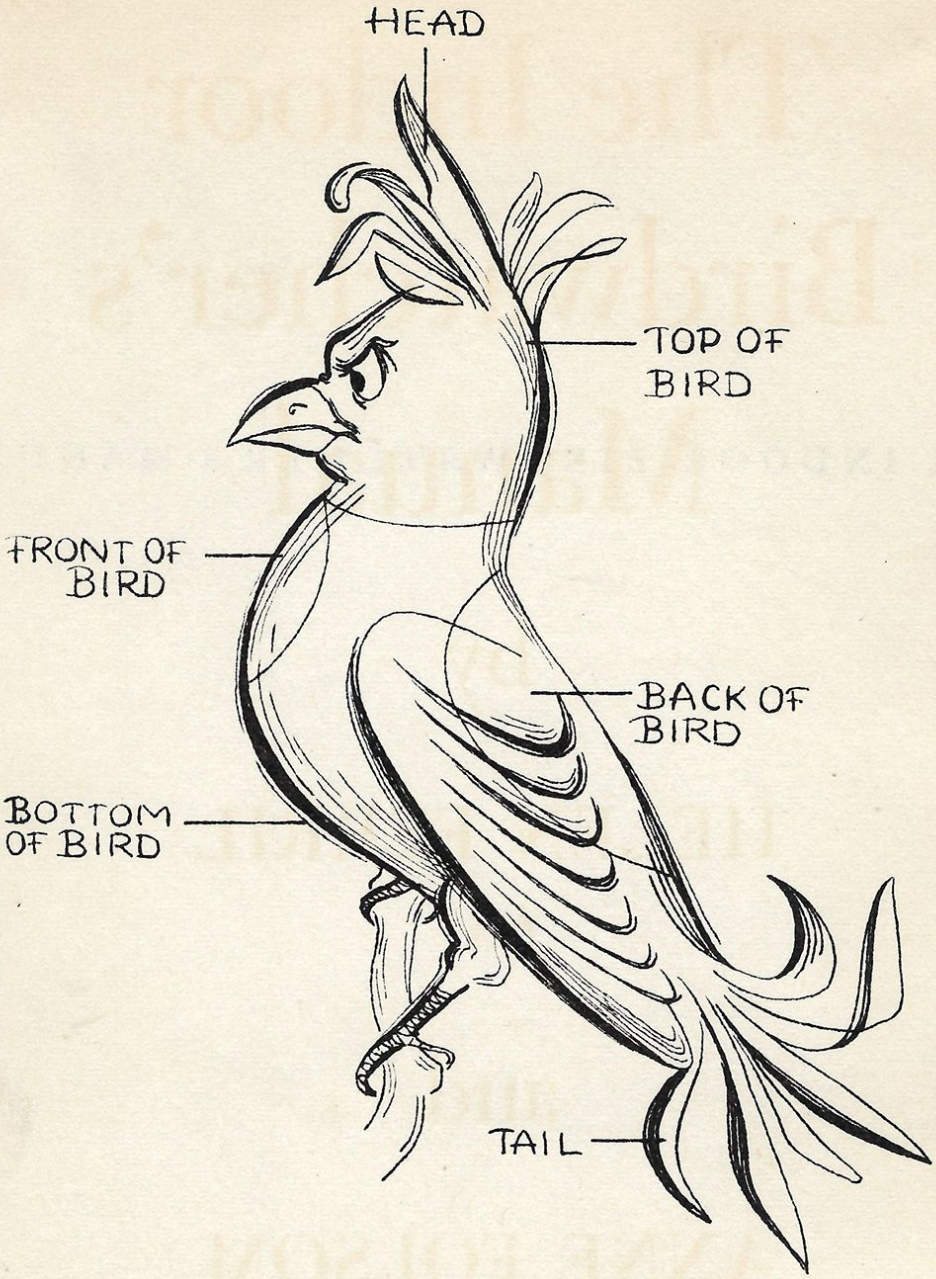
The Indoor Bird Watcher's Manual

Helen Ferril *and* Anne Folsom

THE INDOOR BIRDWATCHER'S MANUAL

Clarice Simons



Topography of a Bird
Showing anatomical sections and definitive areas referred to in this volume.

The Indoor Birdwatcher's Manual

by

HELEN FERRIL
text

and

ANNE FOLSOM
drawings

DUELL, SLOAN and PEARCE
New York

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first edition

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PRINTED IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOREWORD

To the experienced Indoor Birdwatcher, the little birds in this Manual will not appear unusual and no explanation will be necessary. The book will serve as a welcome addition to his equipment, an aid to his observation of new species. The potential, or new, watchers, enthusiastic and friendly but unfamiliar with the Indoor Bird, are those to whom some explanation is due.

The Indoor Bird has been known and loved for as long as good fellows have met together over a bowl of cheer. He may be found in any smoke-filled corner of the U.S.A. He abhors fresh air. His followers need take no exhausting hikes through chilly sunrise mists to observe him. He comes voluntarily on wings of song to those who seek him not but recline in blissful indolence, glass in hand, and give him invitation.

He is a confusing bird, not easily identified. His subspecies may have similar names and be totally different; have identical habitats and characteristics and be utterly unlike. For example an amateur may mistake the Red-eyed Bleerio for the Red-eyed Video, and why not, with such names and the fact that each is most commonly found in bars and cocktail lounges?

The Manual recognizes these perplexing problems and has devoted an introductory page to a Topography of a Bird which shows what a bird looks like in the first place, what his different parts are called and explains the scientific terms to be used in the book. If the Topography is carefully studied the rest of the volume should not be too hard to follow.

And now an explanation to the professionals. Flagrant omission of some of the best-loved species will be noted and the writer admits these omissions with regret. The Indoor Bird, however, is a bird of dual personality, actually two birds in one, and it is expedient here to deal with only one side of his nature, the side which permits him to fly at will along the accepted routes of the Postal Service.

To the far-flung membership of the Society of Indoor Bird-watchers, continued success; to the eager novitiates, good hunting; and to the brightly plumaged, gay little birds themselves, gratitude from the heart for shining a bit of light into this Vale of Tears.

H.F.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In works of this nature it is customary to offer thanks to those whose unstinted efforts and tireless research into the subject at hand have made it possible, also, to name the particular specimen with which each is most definitely associated. In all approved ornothological texts undisputed scientific records are at hand to verify such acknowledgments.

Circumstances surrounding the observation and reporting of the *Indoor* Bird, however, preclude such procedure in the Manual. The Indoor Bird is unique in that an identical species may be discovered and reported simultaneously and spontaneously by not one but several persons, widely separated geographically, each of whom is firmly convinced that he is the first to encounter it . . . and he is proud and boastful of the fact.

The Manual does not wish to destroy his self-esteem. Therefore, foregoing specific credit to individuals, it merely lists the names of a few outstanding professionals who have contributed greatly to the lore of the Indoor Bird:

William Barrett, John Barrows, Martha Bullitt, William Burry, Jr., Marian Castle, John Ciardi, H. L. Davis, Avis and Bernard DeVoto, Dr. William Edmundson, Jane and Tom Cooper, Al Crist, Dorothy Gardiner, Stewart Holbrook, Aldous Huxley, David and Brookie Lavender, Vincent McHugh, Marian Merrell, Dr. S. G. Morley, Hugh Lawrence Nelson, Bernie Nides, Helen Rich, Chris and Bob Richards, Dr. Florence Sabin, Carl Sandburg, Mari Sandoz, Lois and Elbert Scoggins, Virginia Sorensen, Edward Stanley, Belle Turnbull, Dixon and Elizabeth Wecter, George and Toni Willison, Will Shafroth, Raymond Wagner.

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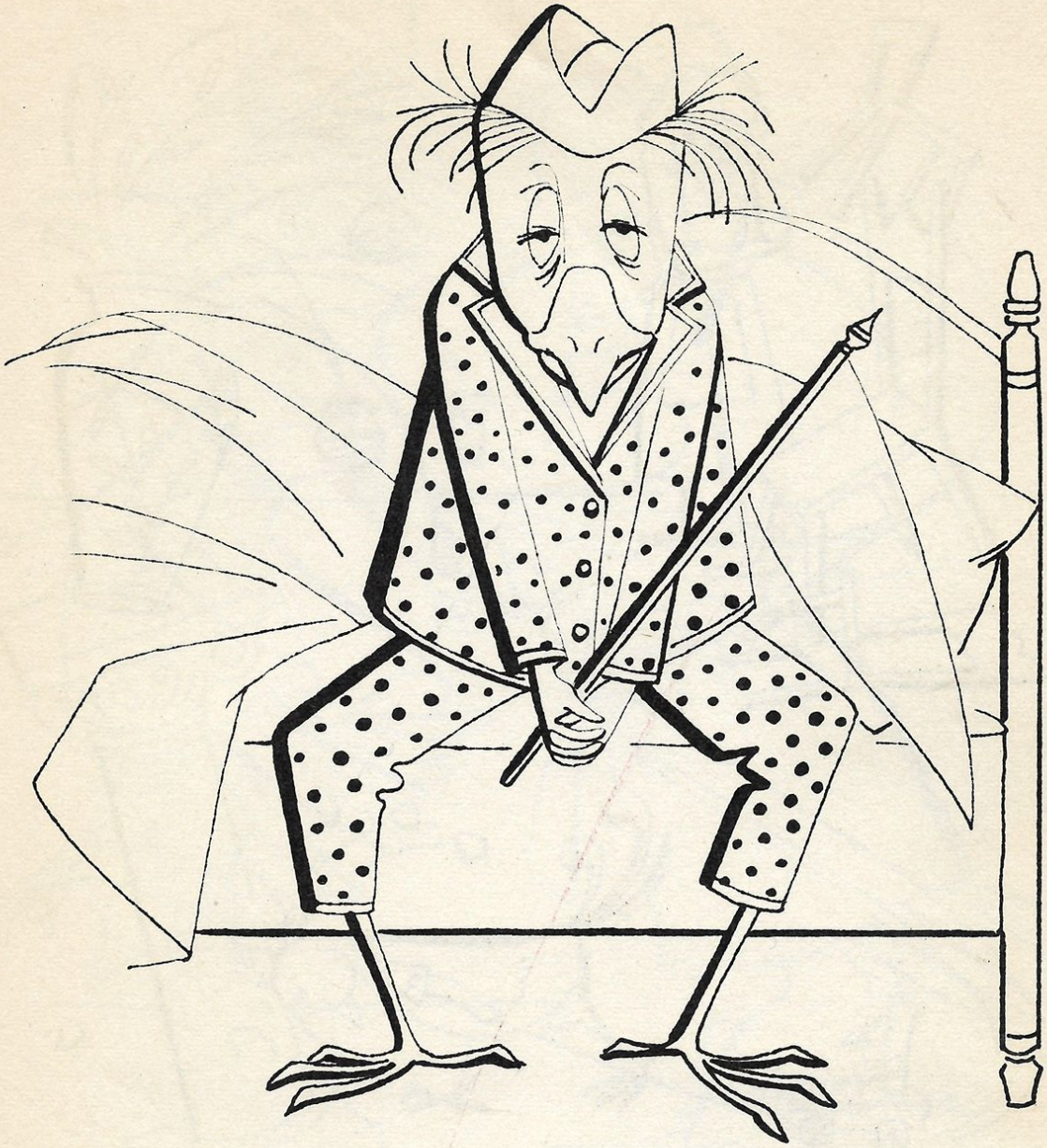


THE EXTENDED BAT

(Old School Typhosis)

Male, returns to Alma Mater regularly in month of June each year, during this period plumage may undergo strange mutation, inclined to gather in reminiscent flocks, loyal bird, frequently observed carrying bottle concealed in feathers.

CALL: Swee-Tad-a-line. (On long-drawn-out note.)

THE BABY BUNTING

(Infantum Terribilum)

Male or female, immature bird, inclined to be destructive within nest, education provided by progressive method, family willing to cooperate in "understanding" it at insistence of teacher, distinguishing characteristics noted in strained facial expressions of parents, paternal ancestor commonly engaged in search for adequate material to enfold it.

CALL: Come on, men, *Charge!*

THE HAIRY-CHESTED BACKSLAPPER

(Salutans Vigorans)

Male, general condition robust, posture erect, takes exercise daybreak at open windows any season, breathes deeply, commonly noted occupying prominent position in gatherings of other males, luncheon clubs, etc., considers self popular bird, distinguishing characteristic startling effect on other species.

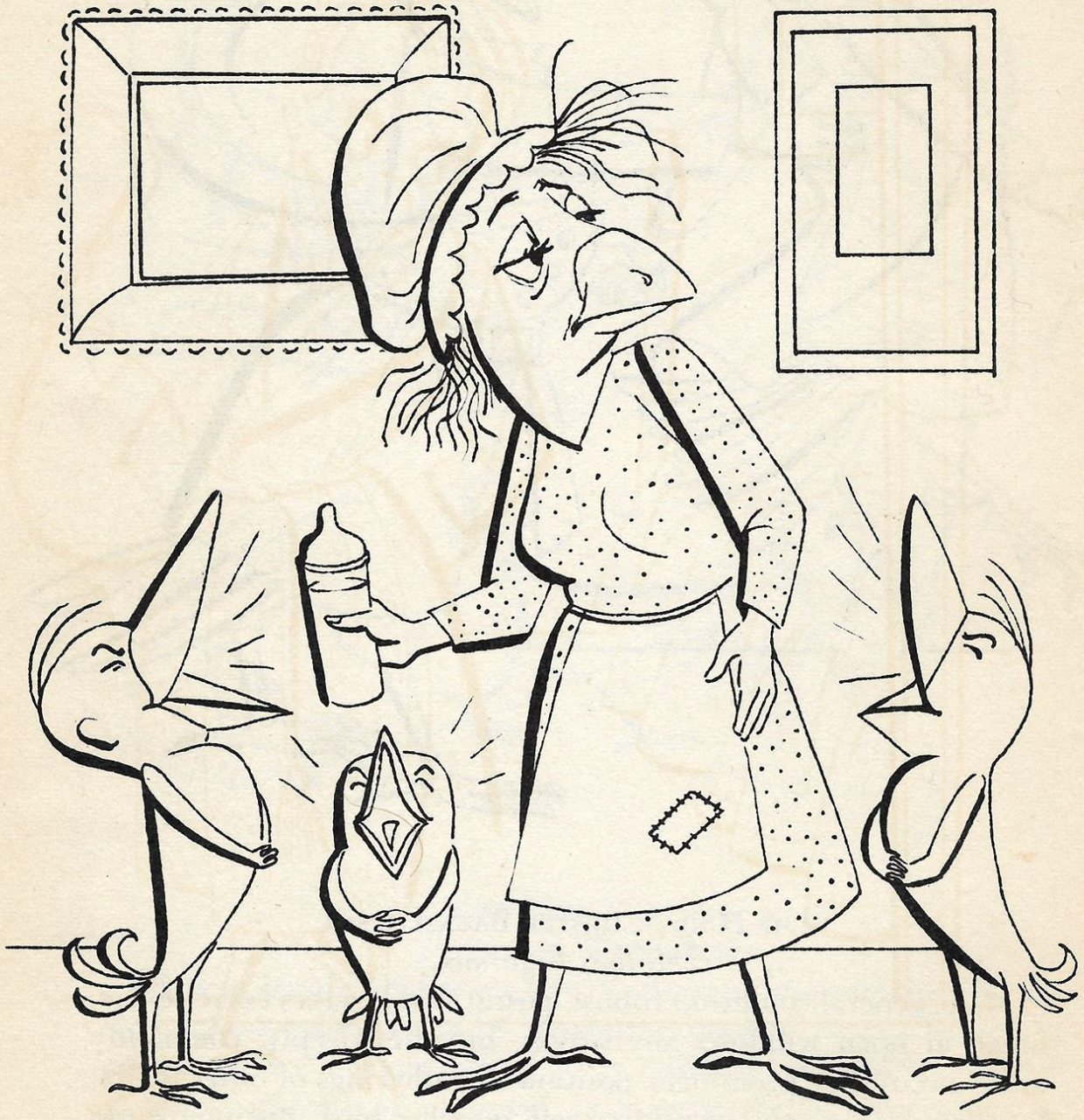
CALL: *Hy*-ya, Bub! (On loud, explosive note.)

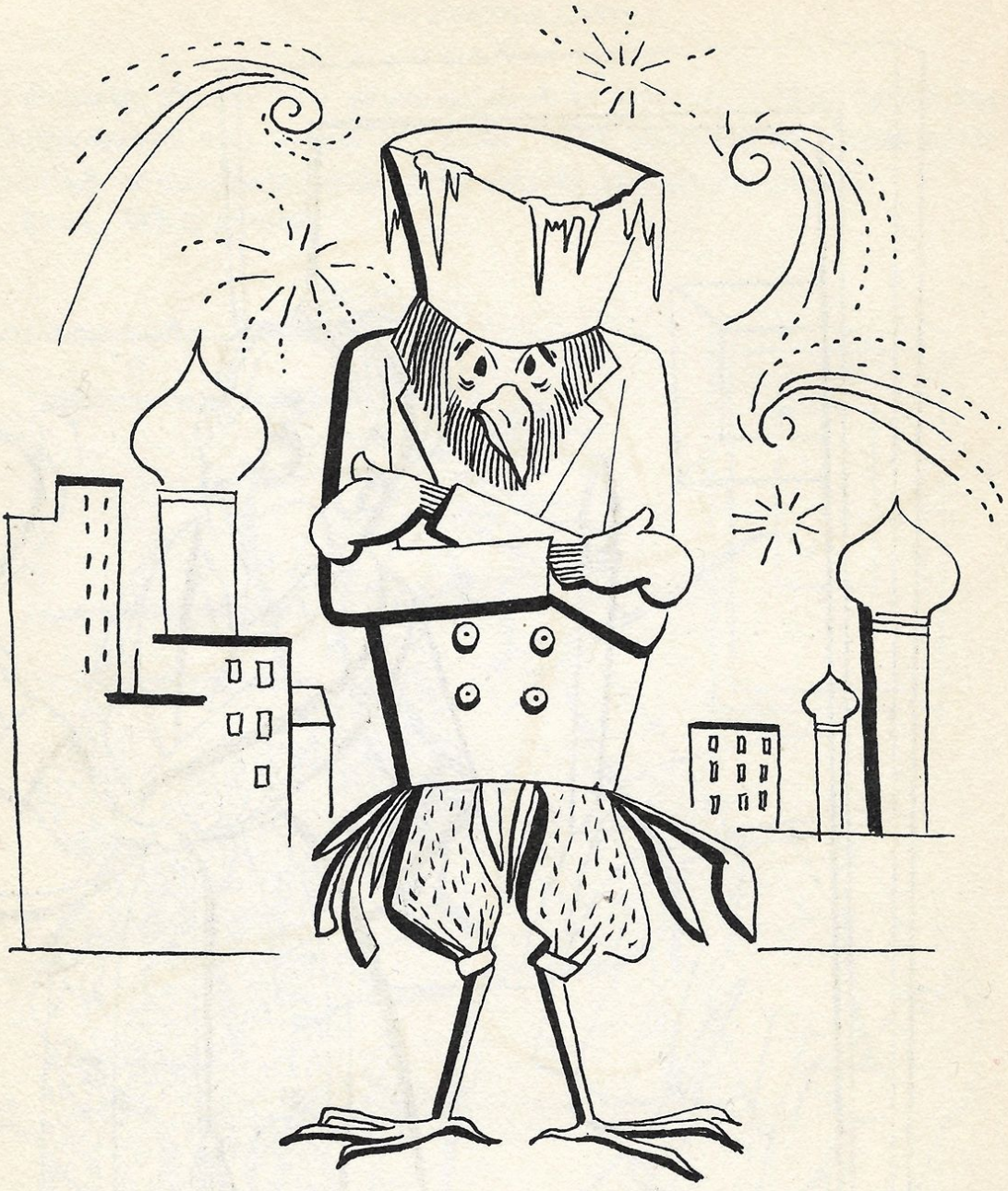
The Fertile Dove

(Fecundita Familiensa)

Female, plump bird, plumage drab in coloration, distinguishing characteristic not found in "head" area, inclined to illness early portion of day, nest tends to be untidy and overcrowded.

CALL: What *again?*





THE U. CRANE
(Stalin Oridie)

Male, unhappy bird, habitat frozen wastes far north Soviet Union, often observed taking part in parades and demonstrations organized by the Common Tern, any attempt at gaiety thwarted by high powers as subversive.

CALL: Makes no outcry. Afraid to.

THE OVERSTUFFED CAMISOLE

(Trillorum Malpitchum)

Female, age uncertain, in torso-chest area expanded, other areas rigidly restrained, needs little encouragement to burst into ecstatic song, may easily be mistaken for species of Screech Howl.

CALL: Twas the La-*ha-hast* Ro-hose of Sum-her. (On lilting note.)

THE POST-PRANDIAL GROUSE

(Circumstansus Domesticus)

Male, discontented bird, generally observed in flight from long, rectangular tables, attitude petulant toward mate, inclined to kick dogs, may suffer ulcerous condition of craw.

CALL: *Ma*-ma used to cook it. . . .

THE QUICK GANDER

(Observus Rapidus Maximus)

Male, alert, movements sly, unobtrusive bird, inclined to rotate head in rapid motion, often found in doorways of nests where flocks have gathered, after sharp, all-encompassing glance may indicate intention to migrate, easily attracted by females with gaudy plumage.

CALL: Hmmm!

THE MARINATED HERON

(Cocktailis Loopendensis Plasteridis)

Male found in odd corners after other guests have departed, uninteresting species, plumage generally in disarray, "eye" area bloodshot, voice muffled and indistinct, flight unsteady and confused.

CALL: Wah' shay?

THE F. B. IBIS

(Federalis Copperus)

Male, non-distinctive plumage, tends to mingle unobtrusively with other birds, habitat government buildings generally, distinguishing characteristic metal badge concealed in claw.

CALL: *Let's go.* (On quiet, forceful note.)

THE BLUE-NOSED KILLJOY

(Antifunus, Antisnortus Antiomnium)

Male, form spare and gaunt, plumage dark, funereal, elongated beak area, holds great antipathy toward any form of relaxation, serves as mascot of W.C.T.U., gloomy bird.

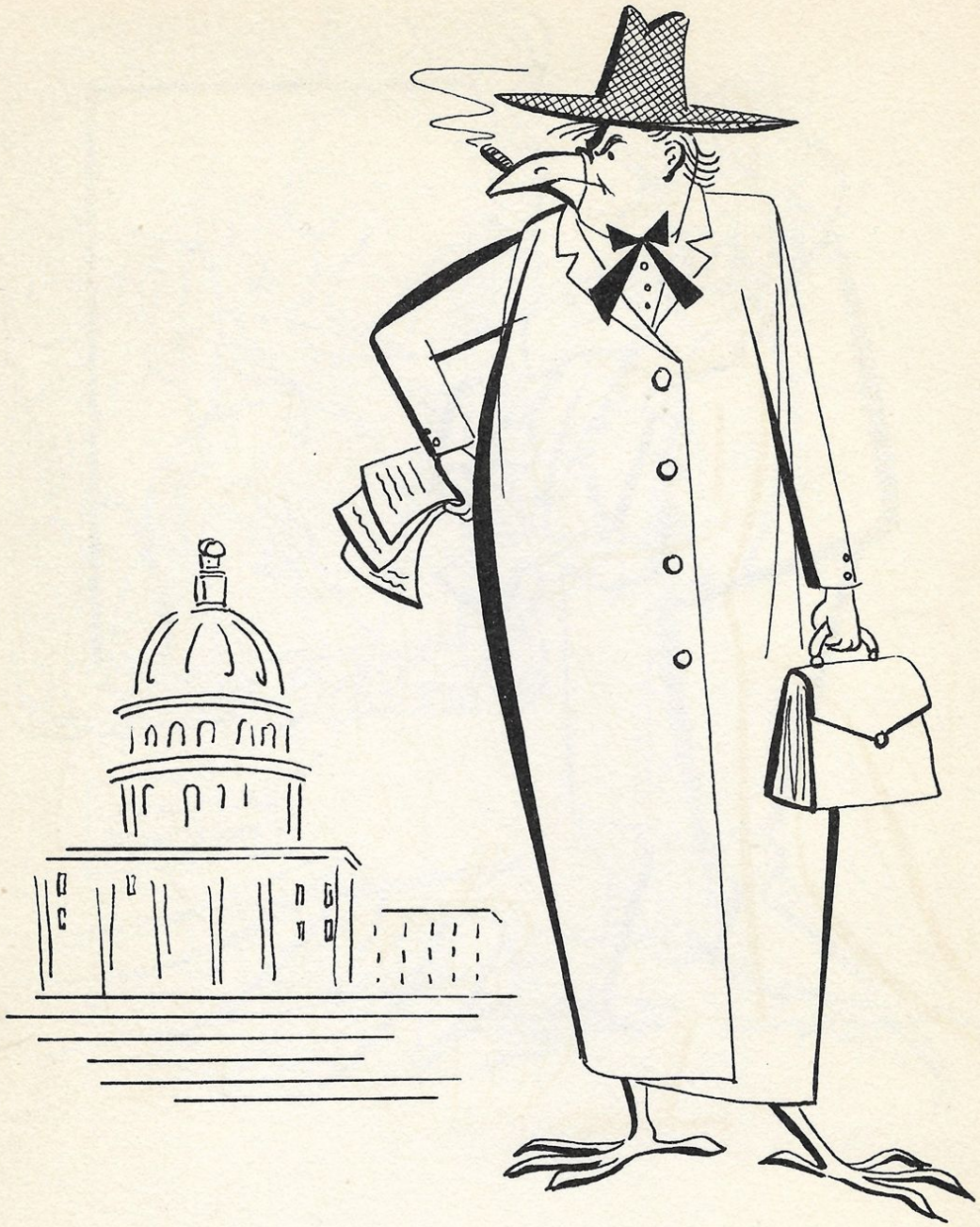
CALL: Sinner! Sinner!

THE CULTURE VULTURE

(Punishmentus Endurus Maximus)

Male, originally indigenous to coastal regions, now observed generally throughout greater U.S., museums, concert halls, etc., attends at insistence of mate, distinguishing characteristic intent (sometimes baffled) expression in "eye" area.

CALL: I guess it's all right.



THE GREAT AMERICAN DEFICIT

(Dilemmans Monitarans)

Male, inclined to over-size, observation of bird generally reported by small bird with plumage resembling barrel, stern visage belies carefree nature, habitat Halls of Congress, finds greatest enjoyment in writing long columns of figures with red fluid.

CALL: Tax and *Spend!*

THE QUEEN DOWITCHER
(Mater Britannia)

Female, stern visage, tends to dominate young, voice consistently heard throughout British Empire, habitat Marlborough House, distinguishing characteristic found in head plumage which has no seasonal variation.

CALL: *No Wallis! No Wallis!* (On emphatic note echoed by offspring.)

THE FLAT-FOOTED FLYCATCHER
(Pedalis Dragionis Rookiensis)

Male, age uncertain, plumage in adults tends toward uniformity, little variation, gregarious, commonly observed in flocks of nine in large open areas within limits urban sections, may be found major flocks early Spring, usually migrates to minors as season progresses.

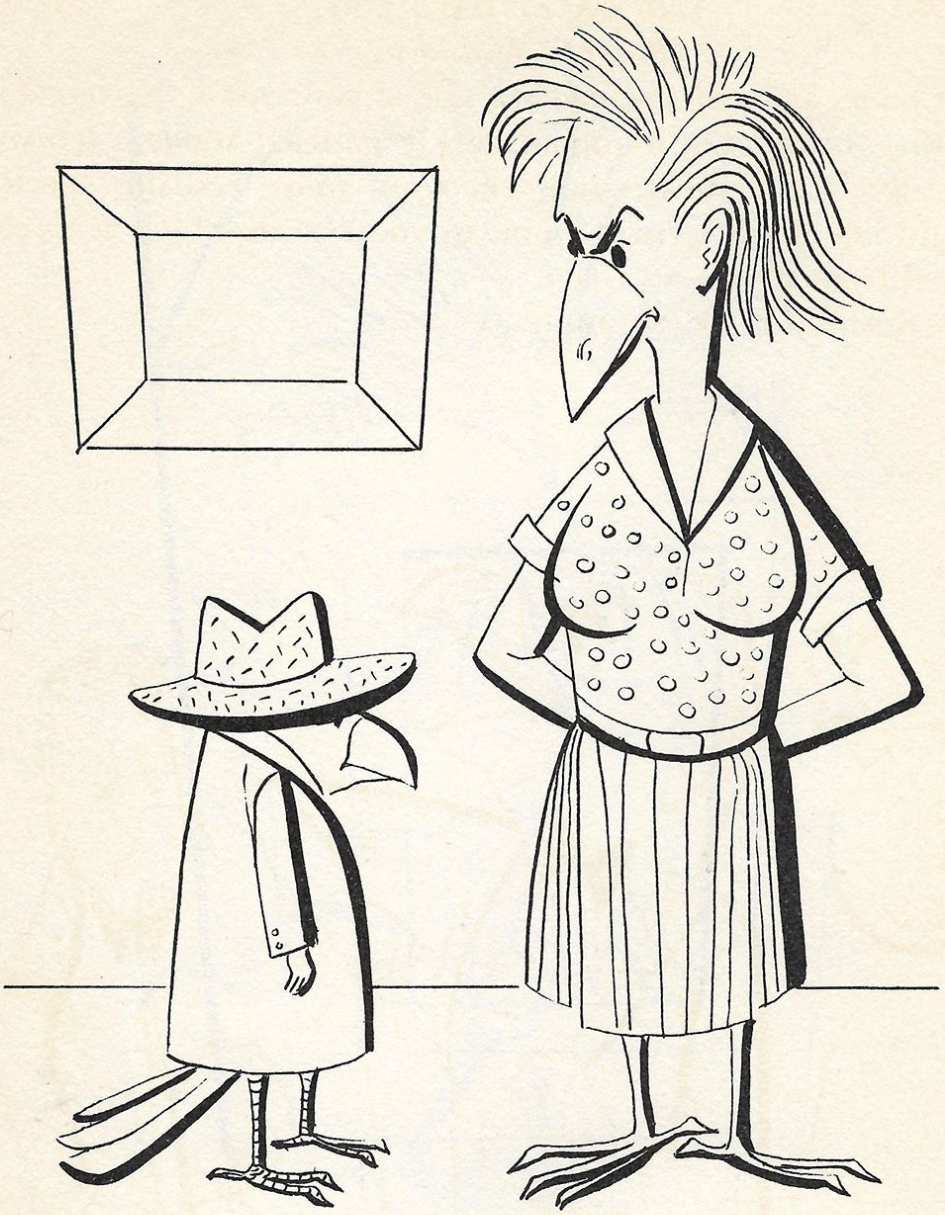
CALL: All mine!

THE INFLATED GASBILL

(Utilitae Exorbitans)

Dull white plumage, small black markings, returns repeatedly to familiar haunts, habitat boxes constructed for protection U.S. Mail, persistent bird, not well regarded, considered pest.

CALL: Pay-up! (On unyielding note.)



THE RED-HEADED HENPECKER

(Spousiosis Dominorum)

Generally mated to much smaller bird, domineering, given to emitting loud squawks when commands are not obeyed instantly,

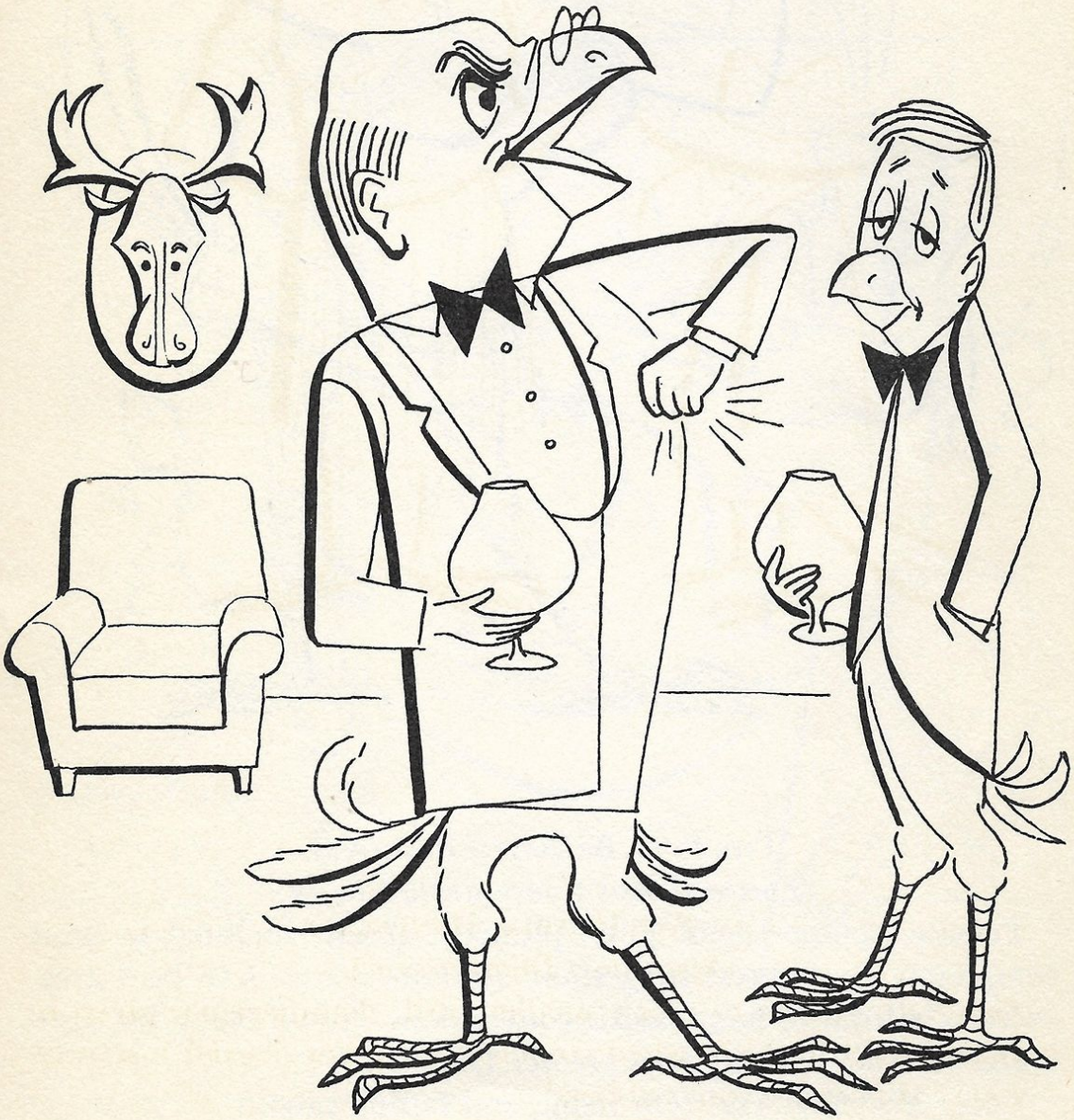
CALL: *Where* are your rubbers!

The Great Bald Ego

(Borealis Maximus)

Adult male, aggressive, considers self of supreme importance in community, commonly found in darkly paneled rooms exclusive men's clubs, has disheartening effect on more retiring species, distinguishing characteristic found in vocal cords which are over-developed from strenuous usage.

CALL: Kerhumph! Kerhumph!



THE FULL-BREASTED PUSHOVER

(Easihadiensis Communita Chesta)

Female, comportment jolly, plumage gaudy, inclined to molt completely at slightest suggestion, roundness noted in heel area, extremely loyal to large flocks, conventions, Army, Navy, etc., migrates commonly along bars greater U.S.

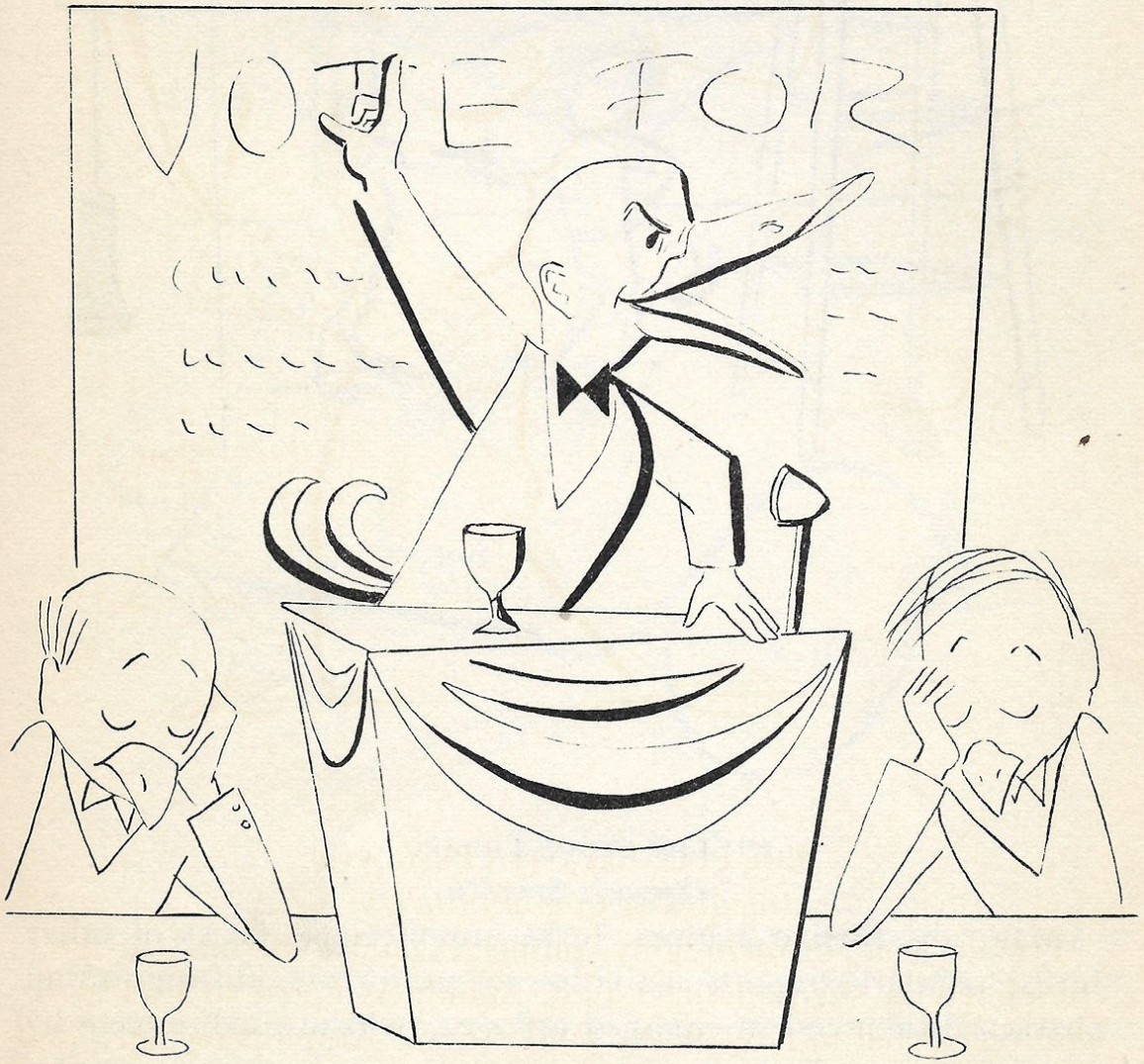
CALL: Yes! Yes! Yes! (On rising and falling pitch.)

The Duck-Billed Platitude

(Conversationis Dullus)

Male, distinguishing characteristic inflated chest area, commonly noted perched with wing extended above feeding flocks of other species, may also be observed on platforms public gatherings, law-making groups, etc.

CALL: Has no call of its own. Imitates other birds.

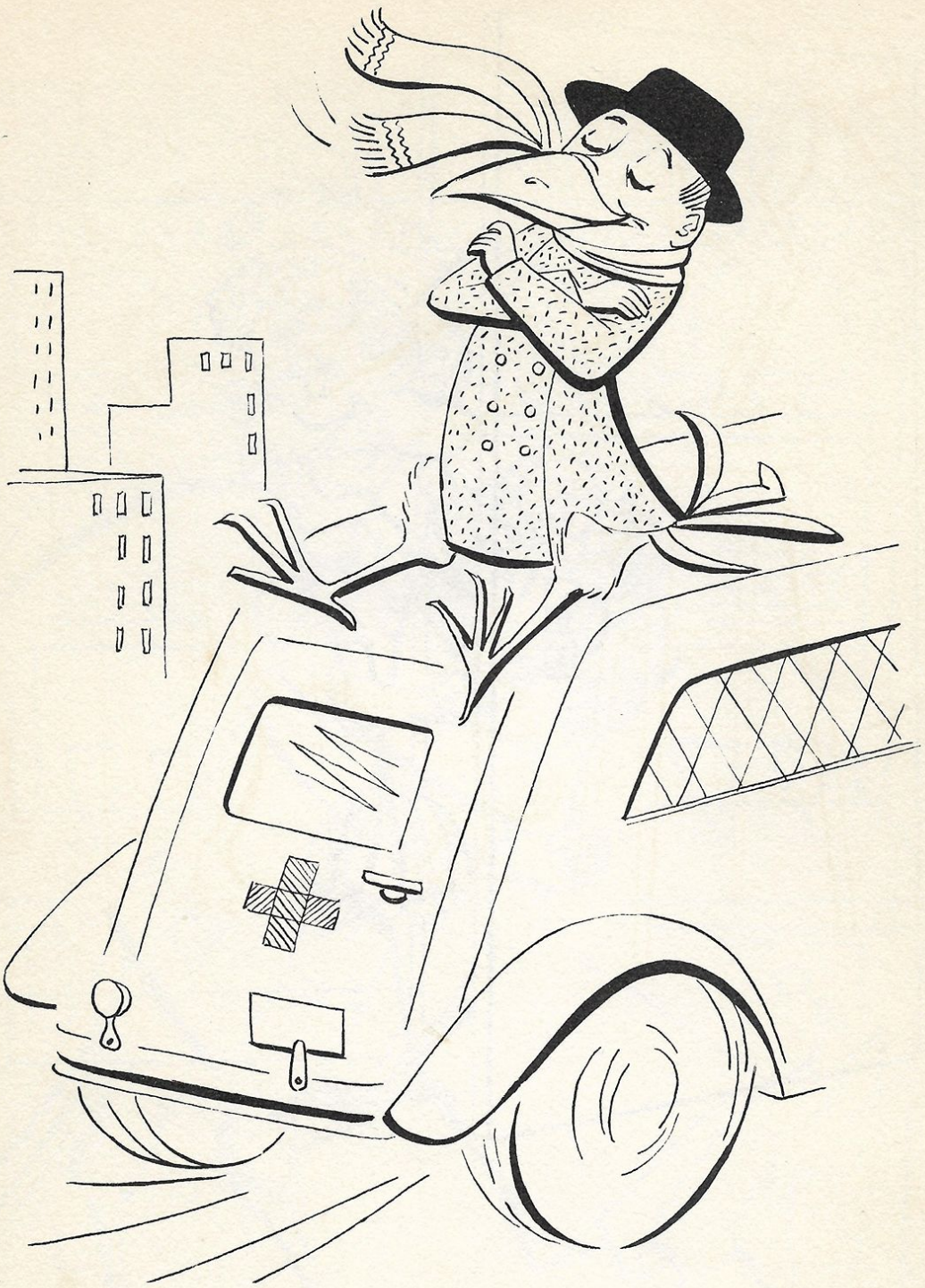


THE STOOL PIGEON

(Spyosis Secretus)

Male, sly, furtive manner, lurks unnoticed in flocks of other birds, regularly reports activities to authorities, distinguishing characteristic noted in enlarged ear area, held in small esteem by associates, cowardly bird.

CALL: What's it worth to ya?

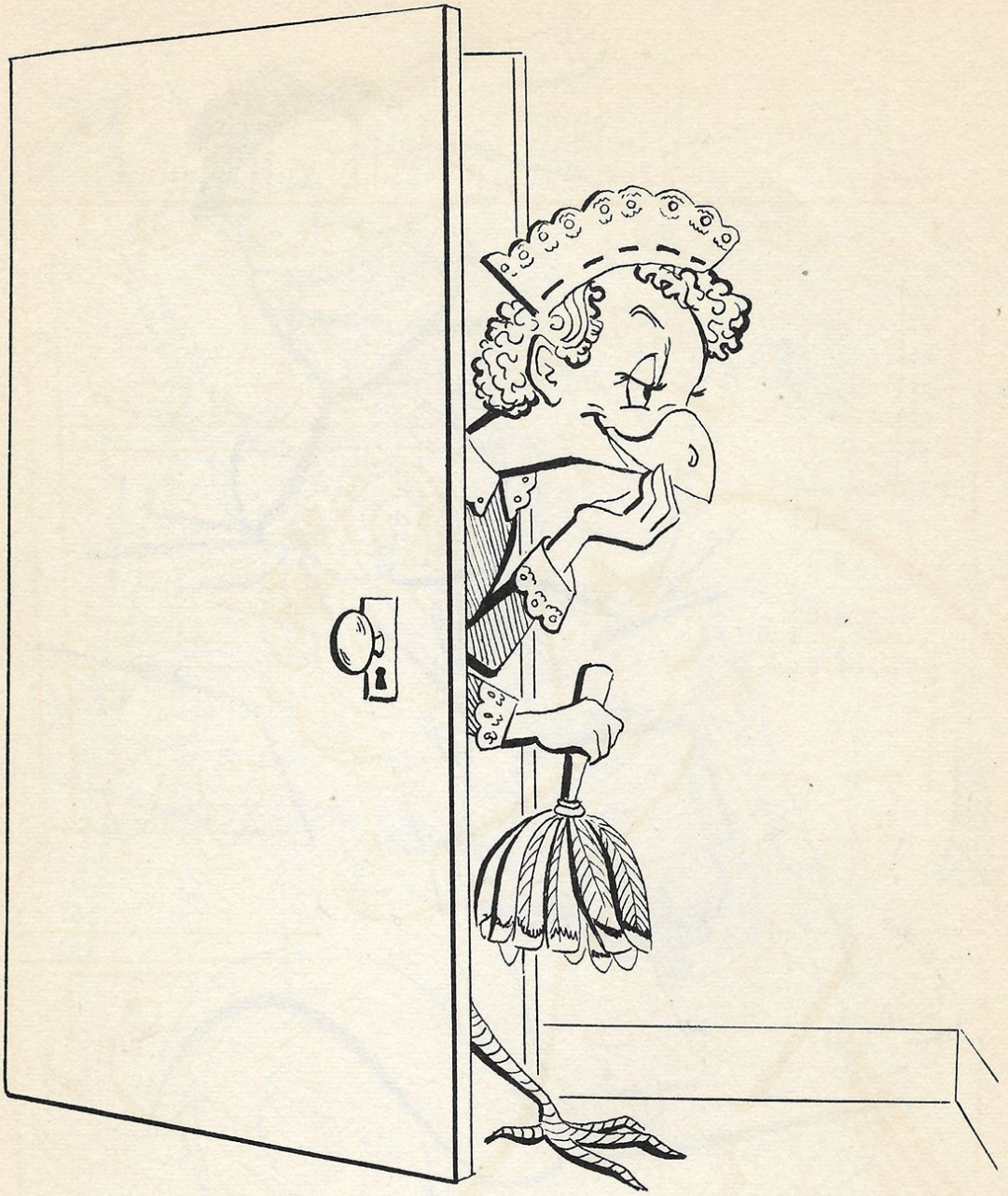


THE BARRED SHYSTER

(Lexus Shamus)

Adult male, haunts corridors courts of law, seldom observed in chambers, flight follows course of accident mercy vehicles, commonly noted presenting card to victim, unctuous manner, sympathetic demeanor.

CALL: Sue! Sue!



THE UNCALLED-FOR SNICKER
(Kibitzer Accidentallis)

Male or female, smug disposition, has little regard for the finer sentiments of other birds, attitude superficial, callous, frequently observed at amateur theatricals, younger members of species in cinema houses.

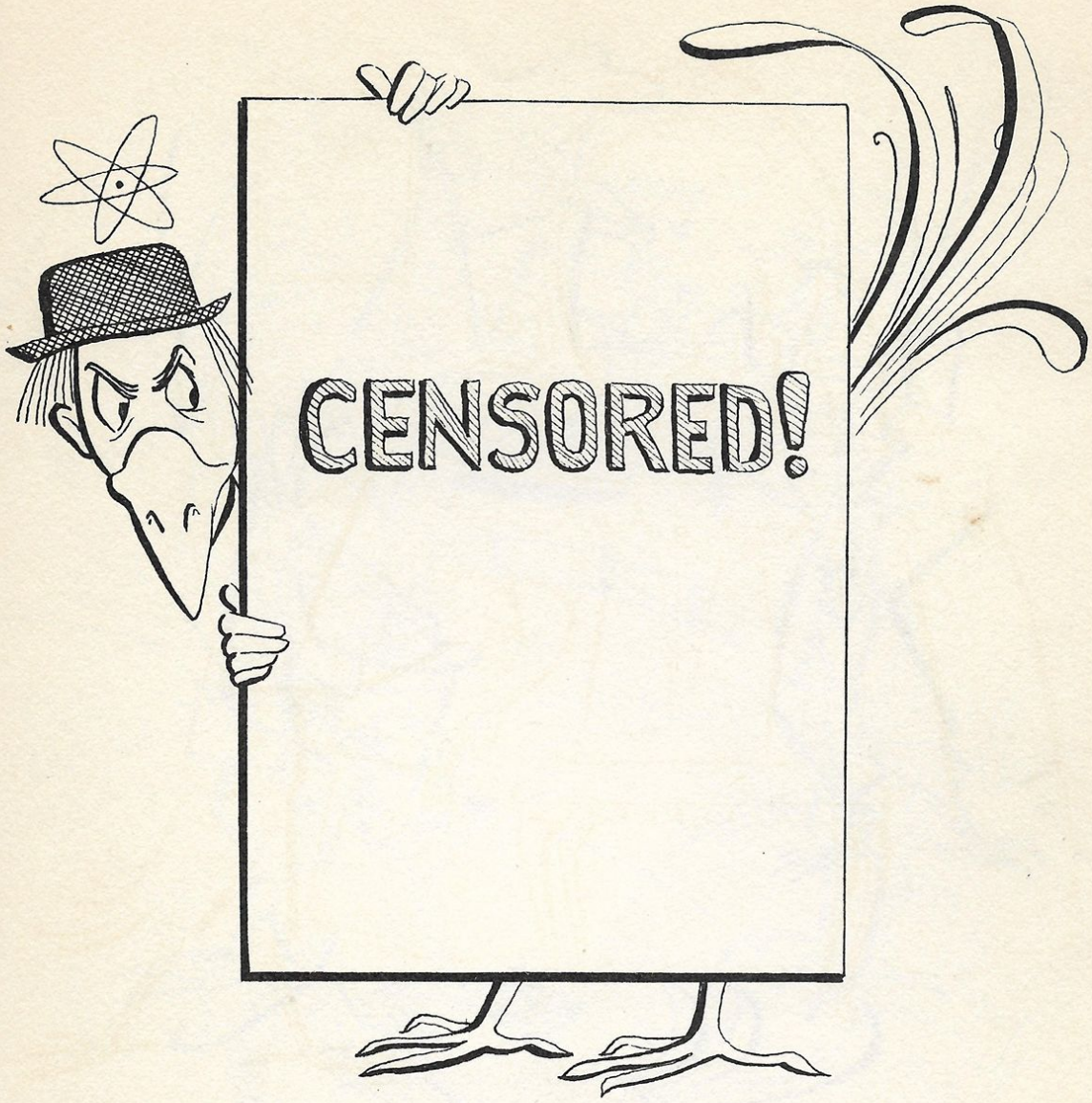
CALL: Fkumpffff!

THE LESSER STENCH

(Pleasurus Moppetus)

Immature male, plumage new, bright, facial area shining, clean, ear area doubtful, has firm belief in own success members opposite sex, will brave wrath of maternal ancestor to further same.

CALL: *Boy!* I smell *good* now!



THE BOMBOLINK

(Uranium Plutonium)

Sex neutron, global bird, formerly indigenous extremely limited areas U.S.A., Stadium University of Chicago, Oak Ridge, etc., presently reported Soviet Union, migration includes regular flights over Lake Success, hold special interest for F. B. Ibis.

CALL: *Now* what?

THE NATURE PLOVER

(Erutan Revolp)

May be either sex, found wandering along paths and streams wooded sections, singly or in flocks, often carries small manual to which it refers on hearing voice unrecognized species, foot covering flat-heeled, plumage rough, tweedy.

CALL: The glasses, quick! There's a *Porzana Cocurniculus!*

THE SHORT-TEMPERED SHEETSNATCHER

(Nocturnus Annoyans)

Male, resentful disposition, closely bunched plumage, exceedingly active during night hours, habitat almost every nest greater U.S.A., mate closely resembles Ruffled Spouse, irritating bird.

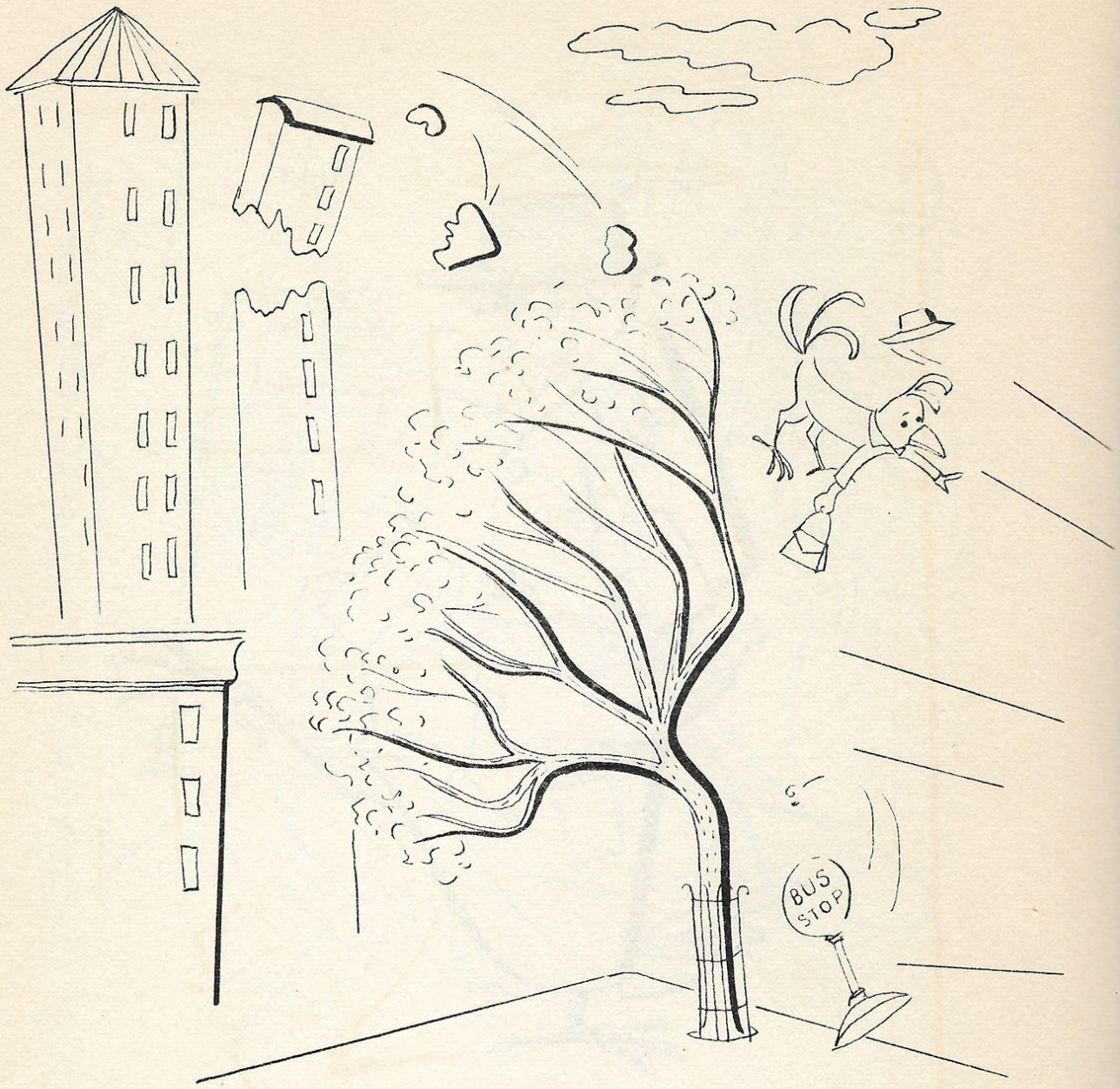
CALL: I have *not* gottem all! (On peevish note.)

THE RED-EYED BLEERIO

(Winus Winus Winus)

Generally male, although female may be observed certain urban section known as "skid row," male easily recognized by unshaven jowl, female by unkempt plumage, thirsty bird, will drink almost anything offered it, including bathing alcohol.

CALL: Buy me a drink?

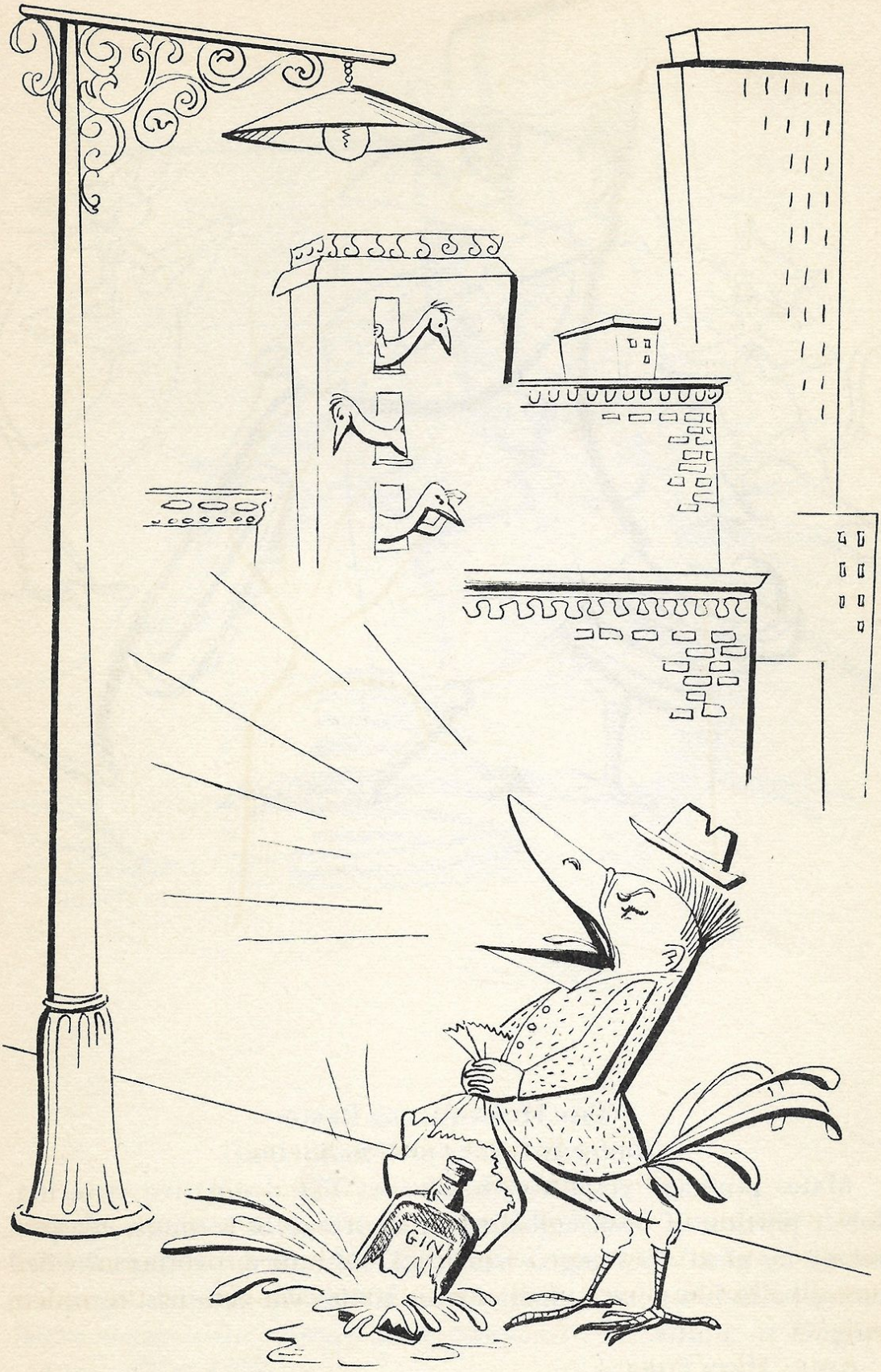


THE BLOOD-CURDLING SHRIKE

(Yellendius Horribilus Nocturnus)

Unreliable bird, cry of alarm may or may not signify disaster, inclined to give way to its feelings on least provocation, lungs usually overdeveloped, will not tolerate members of the rodent species.

CALL: *EEEE*-yike!


GIN

THE HORN-BILLED BEBOP

(Raucous Gillespus Gawdhelpus)

Male, plumage eccentric, head area has distinctive covering, lower portion of beak embellished by fringe of feathers, eye protected by glass discs edged with dark substance, habitat crowded dance halls, has great influence over adolescent catbirds, complete enigma to adults.

CALL: Hava finna skin?

THE PERSONAL FOWL

(Profanitus Slugiensis)

Male, seasonal bird, found in late September open fields, fields barred at ten-yard intervals, gregarious, noted in flocks of eleven, plumage brilliant, padded shoulder area, protected head section, flocks antagonistic toward each other.

CALL: Clip! Clip!

THE ULTRA-VIOLET RAVEN

(Suntana Beachiosa)

Female frequents sands along bodies of water, may also be observed indoors in rays of strange lighting devices, reclining on flat surface covered by cloth of rough texture, anoints body with various oily substances, plumage lobster red early summer shading to deep brown later.

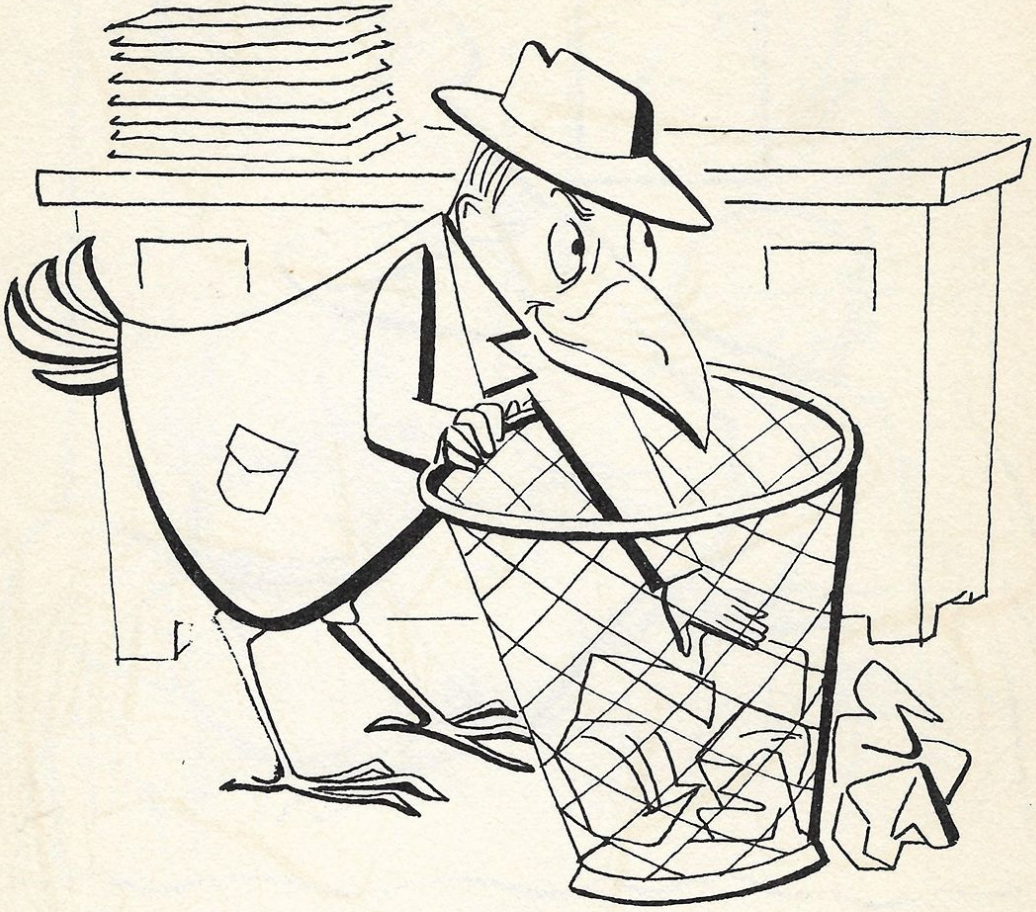
CALL: I'm peeling!

THE SCARLET TEENAGER

(Bobbisoxae Smartalickae)

Adolescent female, active, noisy bird, observed in company of young males occupying vehicle called "hot rod," spends endless hours at instrument known as telephone, distinguishing characteristic rudeness toward adult species.

CALL: So wha-aaat?



THE SELF-APPOINTED SPYCATCHER

(Trivialis Expandens)

Male, shy bird, plumage nondescript, observed inspecting waste baskets, mail containers, Federal buildings, etc., eye keen, ear area extremely enlarged, gains much information from keyholes, not highly regarded by F. B. Ibis.

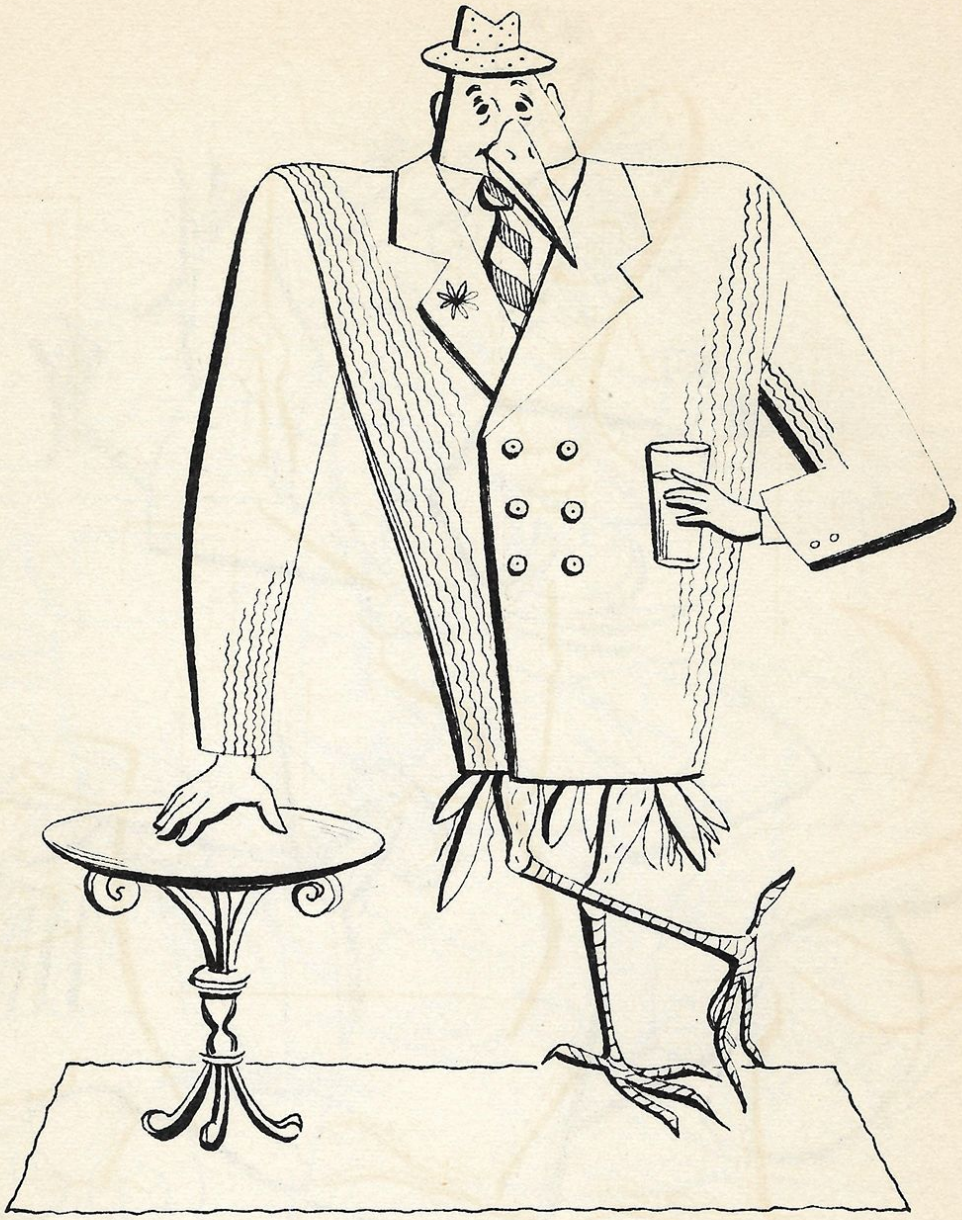
CALL: Wolf! Wolf!

THE POORLY-MARKED TERN

(Confusionis Worsiensis Confoundidimus)

Female, found in rural and urban areas, makes mysterious signals with wing which are seldom understood by other birds, tends to move swiftly on seeing red light or sign marked "Stop!"

CALL: Honk!



THE DOUBLE-BREASTED SEERSUCKER

(Homo Sapiens Communis)

Male, slightly inflated in chest area, drab coloration, expression smug, subspecies Polled Opinion as name combination indicates (Seer and Sucker), predicted Dewey victory in 1948, originally indigenous to South, now commonly observed financial districts, banks, offices, etc.

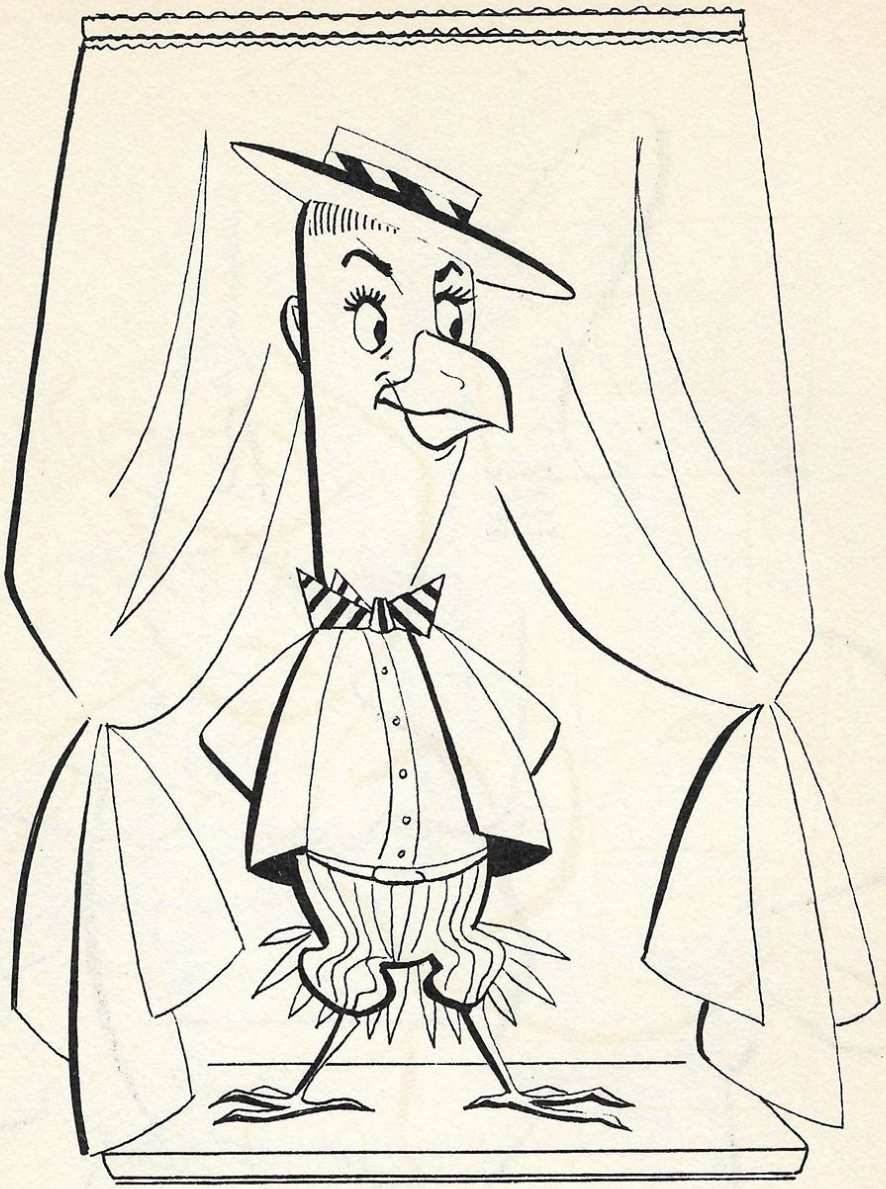
CALL: How ya doin', Boy?

THE CONE-BREASTED SAPCATCHER

(Fortunata Maxima)

Female, extremely docile during mating season, later becomes increasingly domineering and perverse, distinguishing characteristic found in "front" area which has layer of false feathers giving deceptive appearance of fullness.

CALL: If you *really* loved me, you'd buy it!

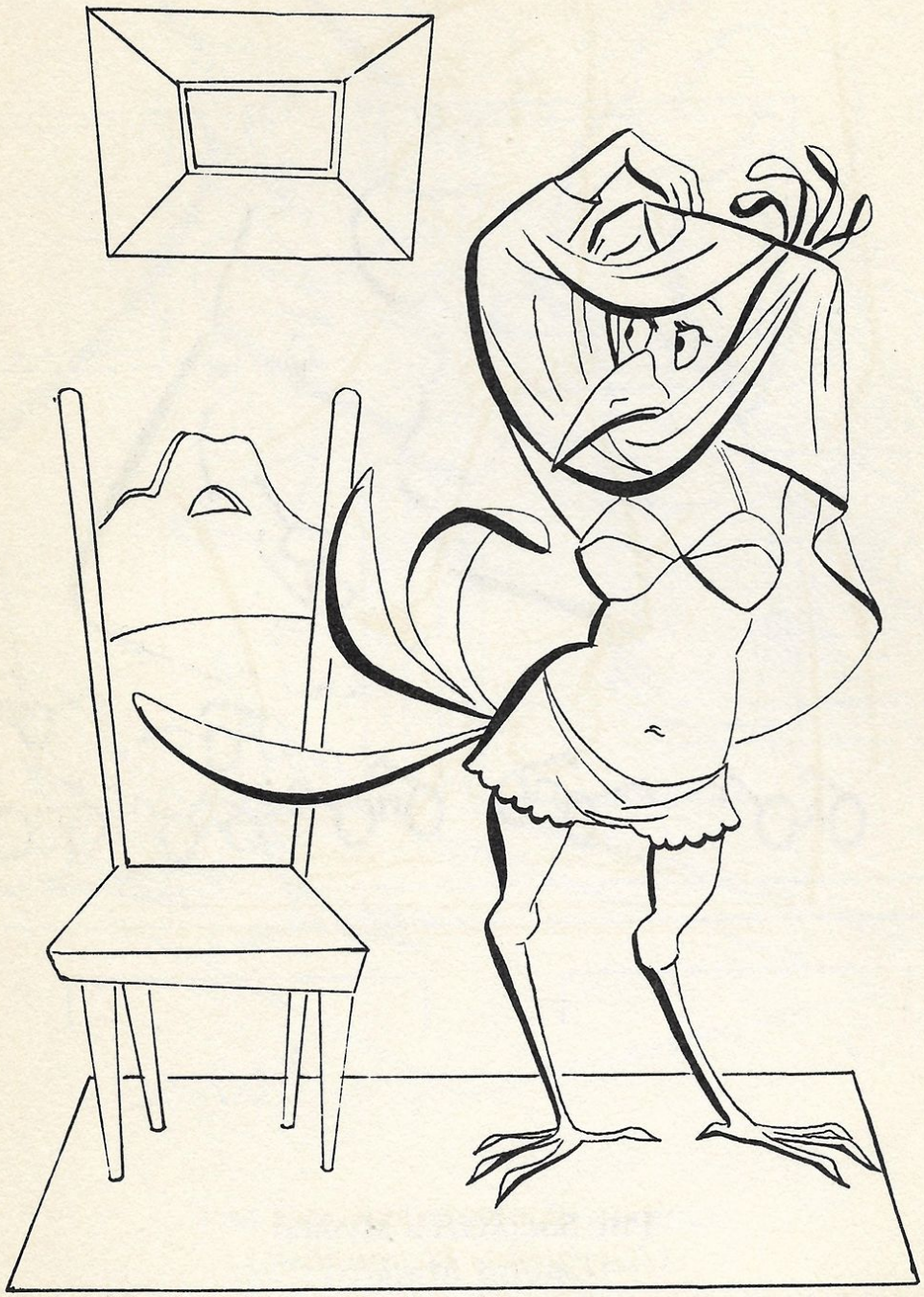


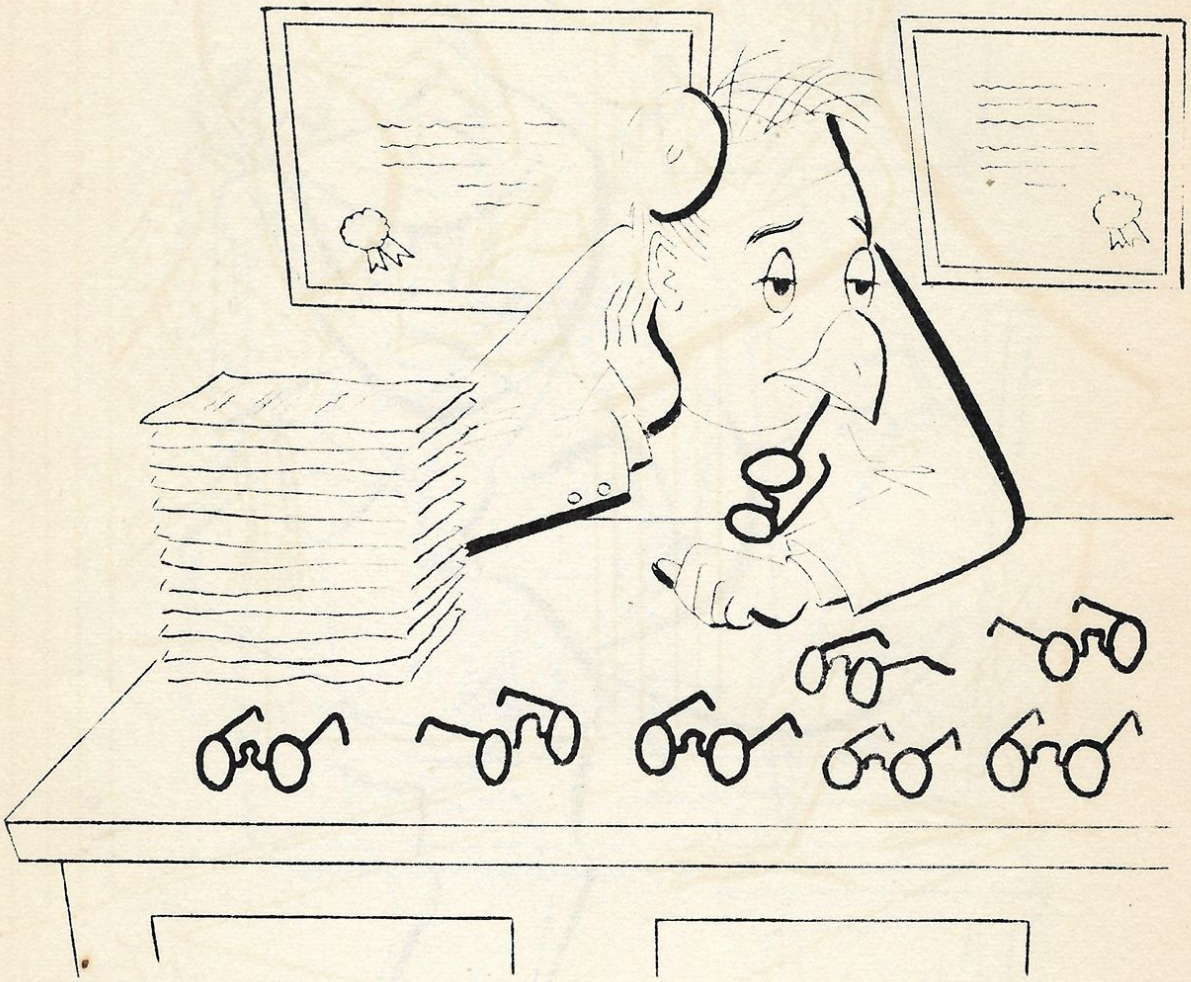
THE BRIGHT-EYED GAWK

(Gogglensis Pleasuralis)

Male, happy nature, willing to take fun where he finds it, susceptible to exposed portions female torso, observed in front rows burlesque shows, strongly resembles Peeping Tom but more forthright in approach.

CALL: *Wow!*





THE SOCIALIZED MEDICO

(Cadusis Mutatis)

Male, originally indigenous to British Isles, efforts being made to introduce species into U.S., distinguishing characteristic noted in "bill" area which is definitely standardized, Cadusis Familiensis extremely antagonistic to this bird.

CALL: Seldom makes call.

THE EARLY-MORNING FUNDRAISER

(Supplication Charitensis)

Female, animated expression in eye area, usually most active before nine a.m., untiring in efforts, frequently observed standing on one foot, with other foot extending through doorway. Earnest bird.

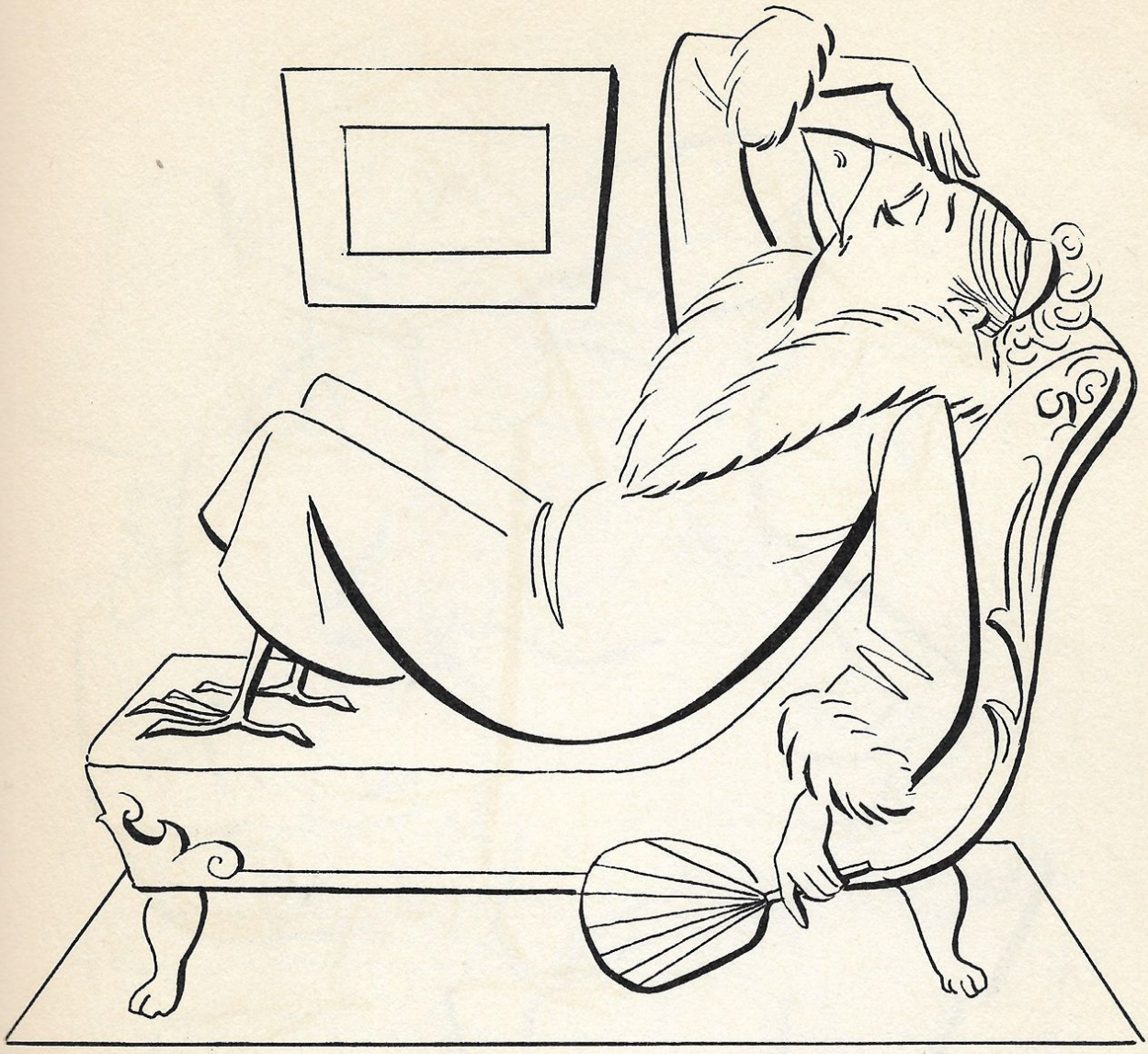
CALL: May I put you down for five dollars?

THE RUFFLED SPOUSE

(Neurosis Domesticans Trivialis)

Female, indistinct markings, drab coloration, plump bird, generally mated to male of gay plumage, seldom migrates, inclined to be preoccupied with condition of nest, easily irritated by misplaced twigs, cigarette ashes, too frequent migrations of male, etc.

CALL: Don't put that *there!*



THE COMMON ENNUI

(Femina Fatiga)

Female, plumage long, flowing, perches on chaise-longues, couches in daylight hours, abhors effort any nature, prefers darkened nest, eye area generally concealed by silken scarf, indolent bird.

CALL: Oh, my poor head! (On complaining note.)

THE TEA-GOING CHITCHAT

(Feminea Sapiae Gossipae)

Female, gregarious, inclined to drape neck area with ropes of pearls, when encountered likely to be found in small flocks with head sections in close proximity, habitat large nests, hotels, parlors, better districts.

CALL: Of course, she's been taking *dope* for *years!*

THE STRUMPETER SWAN

(Chippida Commonosa)

Female, ubiquitous, found in company large groups of males, stag dinners, office parties, etc., considered amusing by firemen from other sections, has overwhelming passion for etchings, plumage gaudy, often disarrayed, easily identified bird.

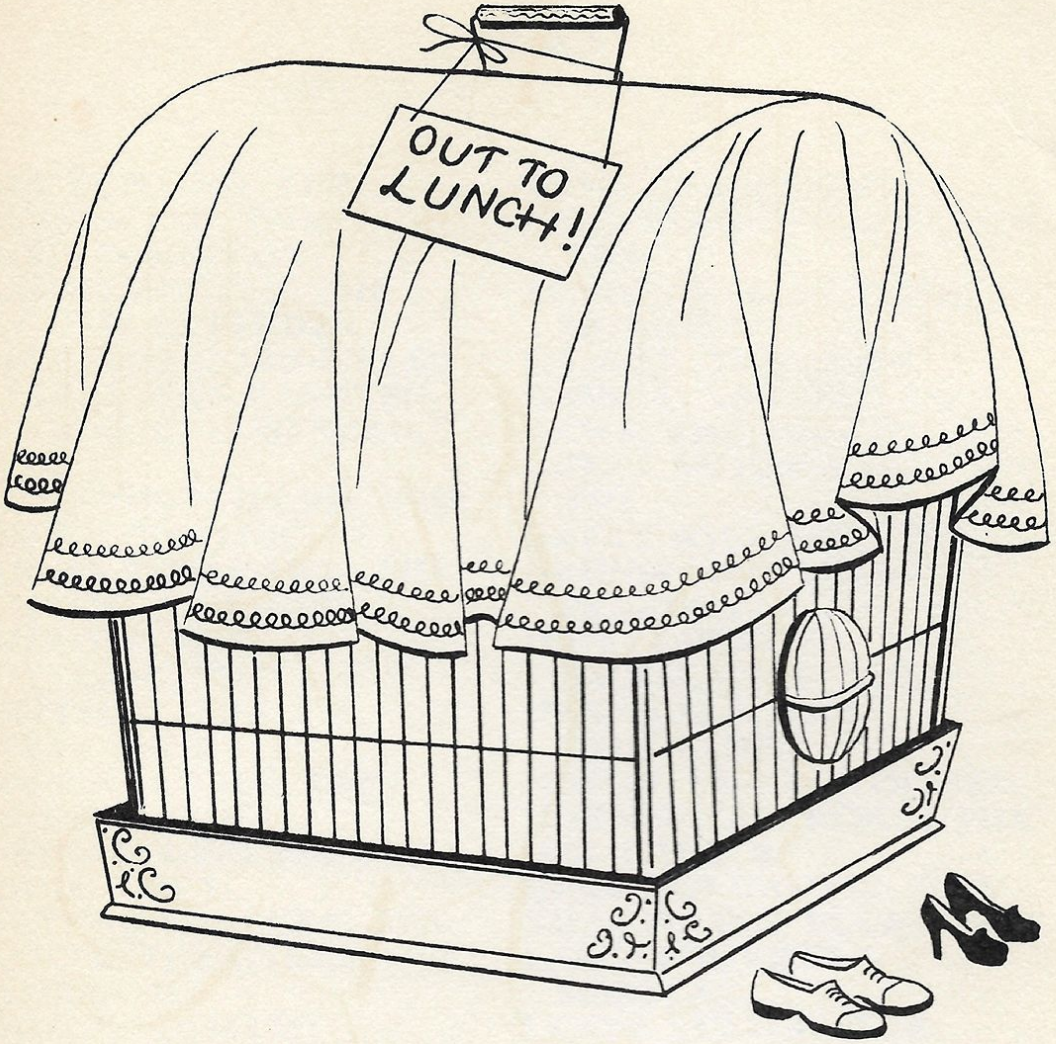
CALL: Sure!

THE SLOW-MOVING LONG ISLAND RAILRUNNER

(Commutoris Nemesis)

Closely related to The Great American Deficit, remarkable green plush plumage, makes queer groaning noises while in flight, not a prompt bird, claims to be greatly influenced by weather conditions.

CALL: No smoking, please!



THE EXTRA-MARITAL LARK

(Frolicus Furtivus)

Male and female, always found in pairs if visible, inclined to mate often, frequent prey for Private Eyebis, co-habitat cottage camps, hotels, also nest of Hard-working Cuckold, migration abrupt under certain circumstances.

CALL: Quick! Get in the closet!

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IBIS, THE F. B.
INFLATED GASBILL, THE
KILLJOY, THE BLUE-NOSED
LARK, THE EXTRA-MARITAL
LESSER STENCH, THE
MARINATED HERON, THE
MEDICO, THE SOCIALIZED
NATURE PLOVER, THE
OVERSTUFFED CAMISOLE, THE
PERSONAL FOWL, THE
PIGEON, THE STOOL
PLATITUDE, THE DUCK-BILLED
PLOVER, THE NATURE
POORLY MARKED TERN, THE
POST-PRANDIAL GROUSE, THE
PUSHOVER, THE FULL-BREASTED

QUEEN DOWITCHER, THE
QUICK GANDER, THE
RAILRUNNER, THE SLOW-MOVING LONG ISLAND
RAVEN, THE ULTRA-VIOLET
RED-EYED BLEERIO, THE
RED-HEADED HENPECKER, THE
RUFFLED SPOUSE, THE
SAPCATCHER, THE CONE-BREASTED
SCARLET TEENAGER, THE
SEERSUCKER, THE DOUBLE-BREASTED
SELF-APPOINTED SPYCATCHER, THE
SHEETSNATCHER, THE SHORT-TEMPERED
SHRIKE, THE BLOOD-CURDLING
SHYSTER, THE BARRED
SLOW-MOVING LONG ISLAND RAILRUNNER, THE
SNICKER, THE UNCALLED-FOR
SOCIALIZED MEDICO, THE
SPOUSE, THE RUFFLED
SPYCATCHER, THE CONE-BREASTED
STENCH, THE LESSER
STOOL PIGEON, THE
STRUMPETER SWAN, THE
SWAN, THE STRUMPETER
TEA-GOING CHITCHAT, THE
TEENAGER, THE SCARLET
TERN, THE POORLY MARKED
U. CRANE, THE
ULTRA-VIOLET RAVEN, THE
UNCALLED-FOR SNICKER, THE
VULTURE, THE CULTURE

The Indoor Bird Watcher's Manual

by

Helen Ferril *and* Anne Folsom

This delightful handbook will surprise the hell out of many a bird lover.

Providing for the identification of an astonishing collection of Indoor Birds, it offers forty-five new species never observed or classified by the mighty Audubon or by any other field naturalist or ornithologist. The Indoor Birds, who are making their first and only appearance in the superb drawings by Anne Folsom, include such ubiquitous types as the Blue-nosed Killjoy, the Redheaded Henpecker, the Extra-marital Lark, and the Quick Gander. For each bird details of "voice, habitat, and distinguishing characteristics" have been provided and for those members of the Society of Indoor Bird Watchers whose ears are trained, the call of each species has been included.

This Manual is the work of an otherwise responsible newspaperwoman, Helen Ferril, publisher of the *Rocky Mountain Herald*. Alluringly illustrated by Anne Folsom, it is a wonderful one doilar book.

DUELL, SLOAN & PEARCE, INC.

'0 Madison Avenue **New York 16, N. Y**